**MIDD-WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL**

**FAQ**

**What are the ultimate goals of the program? What is the vision?**

* To provide Midd-West School District students with the tools necessary to prepare them for the global learning demand. *All* graduates of the Midd-West School District will need to be prepared with these skills whether they join the workforce, go to college, manage the family farm, or enter the military.
* To increase instructional time by providing 24/7 access to resources now available only in school and only during the school day. This includes the hardware, software, files, folders, textbooks, and resources students need.
* To increase student engagement in our classrooms by integrating technology as a tool to enhance instruction and curriculum.
* To differentiate instruction in the classroom using technology to facilitate and enhance classroom instruction. This means the technology supports all students in the classroom to include those who need enriched instructional activities to those who need additional or modified instructional activities.
* To provide equal access to technology for *all* our students.
* To eliminate the extended time and aggravation that comes from multiple students who access computers from shared carts throughout the day, resulting in slow logon times and laptops that require frequent maintenance and repair.
* To increase the availability of technology at Midd-West Middle School and our elementary schools.
* To explore the possibility of offering more online learning opportunities for students enabling them to acquire additional credits or recoup credits lost.
* To provide 2017 graduating seniors and beyond with the opportunity to purchase the laptop s/he has used during their high school years for $1.00 providing these students with the technology needed to begin a career or college experience.

**Where will we get the additional funding necessary to support this initiative?**

Our current technology plan ensures a commitment to keeping technology available by providing students with the equipment necessary to meet the global learning demand. Estimated costs of supporting this proposal over the lifetime of the plan are within the budgets approved by the school board and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Our most immediate need is to replace the Classrooms for the Future laptops. This includes just under 700 machines that were once available to our students, but are now either out of circulation entirely, or barely operational. Doing nothing is not an option we can consider if we want to adhere to the goals of our technology plan, or if we want to provide our students with opportunities to utilize technology at Midd-West High School.

With careful planning and reorganization of funds, the estimated technology budget for the 2013-2014 school year is currently approximately $40,000 over last year’s budget, which includes the estimated cost of the year-one lease option. Available to help support this first year of implementation is the possibility of having $42,000 left over from the 2012-2013 budget that can be used to offset this increase. This means that no additional funding would be necessary to support year one of the project.

Future options to get us through the initial implementation years until the budget levels off at the estimated $220,000 (see PowerPoint from the January 14, 2013 board meeting) include the potential of using funds from cyber school students who may return to the district, as well as using current funds set aside for textbooks. We also anticipate potential savings in repair costs, printing/copying, textbooks, graphing calculators, and maintenance.

**How many extra machines will be needed to cover student needs should one or more break, or hard drives crash?**

We will be able to use some of our current technology to cover this need; however, a safe number is around 10%. We currently have additional machines calculated into our estimated budget.

**What type of professional development will be needed in order to train the teachers in this new venue? Where and how will this training be accomplished, what will be the added cost, and where will the funding come from?**

Technology-related professional development has been a priority since the inception of Classrooms for the Future in 2006, which initially focused on our high school English, math, science, and social studies teachers. Since then, we have offered professional development in a variety of ways such as the Midd-West School District summer institute sessions and professional development that occurs during the school year.

Summer institute sessions provide opportunities for all staff to pick and choose from a variety of different workshops that are available as half-day or full-day sessions. All teachers who initially received our first wave of MacBooks three years ago participated in a full day of professional development. This six-hour, summer session focused on basic operations, as well as software integration, and was a requirement for any teacher receiving a new laptop.

We have continued to offer multiple technology sessions each summer during our summer institute on topics such as MacBook basics, web design, SMART Board, research strategies, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, digital storytelling, web quests, integration strategies and activities, Web 2.0 tools, Photoshop, Google Apps, Podcasting, Garage Band, iMovie, Adobe Creative Suite, and more.

Professional development that takes place during the school year is offered in a variety of ways. District scheduled professional development days, before- and after-school sessions, and individual one-on-one sessions are available and scheduled with a variety of topics in mind. We also offer self-directed training such as self-guided how-to documents and videos along with regularly published newsletters that include specific topics that are high-frequency questions and/or concerns. All of these documents are available for staff to access anytime.

We anticipate no increase in funding necessary to continue to offer the type of professional development opportunities we have been offering over the past several years. We have knowledgeable technical staff and teachers who are capable of delivering professional development onsite.

**Does the district have an acceptable use policy created to give to the students/parents?**

The district has an Acceptable Use Policy combined with an Internet Safety Policy (#815), which can be found on the Midd-West School District website under School Board > Policies. The Acceptable Use Policy was recently updated, and the school board approved these revisions on August 27, 2012. This is a document our students and parents sign at the beginning of every school year.

**Will the machines be "locked down", so the students cannot download and execute programs not authorized by the district? (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Netflix, Pandora, etc.)**

Locking down computers is a continuous balancing act between what is not enough and what is too much. Currently, we do have sites such as FaceBook and Twitter blocked, however these sites can also be useful educational tools that would enable us to communicate with students and families about things going on in our schools and/or district.

**What is the liability to the district if illegal content is downloaded on the machines, or circulated?**

We have attended many sessions at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, as well as the Safe Schools Conference regarding our legal responsibility. It is our understanding that districts must make a “reasonable effort” to protect students from illegal content. We do this through content filtering software, as well as our Acceptable Use Policy. Our content filtering software works while the student is in school, as well as while the student is at home.

**Will the students at any time be plugged into the district's network? If so, are there provisions so there won't be viruses introduced.**

Students will be working wireless through the district’s network while in school and will not physically be “plugged” into the network through Ethernet cabling. We do have multiple provisions in place that protect us from viruses. This includes virus protection software at the server level, as well as virus protection at the client [individual computer] level.

**Will the students have e-mail accounts? If so, will they be through the district, and will they be monitored for content?**

We have discussed the need to provide email accounts for students that could possibly be available through one of our “cloud” accounts such as Google Apps, or safe student/teacher applications such as Gaggle, but we have not yet determine if this is a need. Students do not typically use email as their primary communication tool, and the laptops are equipped with tools that may serve the communication purpose that email is intended to serve.

**Will there need to be additional staff hired to meet the needs of the students, teachers, or the technology department?**

We do not anticipate the need to hire additional staff.

**What is your anticipated yearly maintenance/repair costs?**

Our current annual budget for maintenance and repairs is $3,000. Most of our expenses are incurred as we are attempting to keep old technology in working condition, or replace keyboards and cracked screens due to inappropriate student behavior. New laptops purchased are covered under a three-year protection plan, which includes maintenance, repairs, and software upgrades. This typically covers most repairs that are internal hardware failure in nature.

We anticipate students will take better care of the equipment, since they will have ownership of their own laptop. [For example, students are less likely to pick keys off of their own machines.]

**What if families do not have an Internet connection at home?**

The Internet is just one resource available for students. Laptops can still be used to do homework at home. If an assignment requires the Internet, that part of it will need to be done at school or at a place that offers Internet access.

**Do other districts in the area have one-to-one projects?**

From our initial search of the school districts in our immediate area we found Penns Valley Area School District has a one-to-one laptop initiative with MacBooks at the high school level and Montgomery Area School District has a one-to-one initiative with iPads. Currently, Loyalsock School District is starting their progression to a one-to-one project with iPads.

Other districts in Pennsylvania that have one-to-one projects include Quakertown, Kutztown, State College, Punxsutawney, Schuylkill Haven, Downingtown, Lower Merion, Biglerville, and Blairsville-Saltsburg .

**The last date approval would be required:**

In order to begin a proper and thorough implementation plan we should have at least three months before the end of the school year to work through our plans for communication, distribution and other logistics. We will want to plan informational sessions with students, teachers, parents, custodians, and bus drivers. We will need to outline our summer schedule for purchasing, imaging, and parent training. We will need to plan for distribution, charging areas, and specific repair procedures. We will want to schedule additional professional development within our summer institute sessions, and we want time to reach out to our 160+ cyber-charter students to give them plenty of time and opportunity to re-enroll at Midd-West.

Timing is right! Our district has been preparing for this initiative over the past three years by putting plans, policies, and infrastructure in place. We have the resources to move forward, and we are ready!